

London Physician's Letter of  
Montpellier Practice  
In Curing Venereal Disease,  
1730.

15602/13



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A  
LETTER

FROM A

*Physician* in London

TO HIS

FRIEND in the Country;

Giving an Account of the

*MONTPELLIER* PRACTICE

In Curing the

VENEREAL DISEASE.

Wherein the

Certainty, Ease, and Safety of that Method above  
any other yet discover'd; and the Inefficacy,  
Danger, and ill Consequences of the common Way  
by Salivation, are fully Demonstrated.

---

L O N D O N:

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J. E. T. E. J.

Robert H. W. W.



THE WELLCOME TRUST

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THE WELLCOME TRUST

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*A LETTER from a Physician in  
London, to his Friend in the  
Country.*

*Honoured S I R,*



RETURN you my most hearty  
Thanks for your kind Letter of  
Congratulation on my safe Return  
to *England*, after having been more  
than five Years out of it. So long  
an Absence, notwithstanding the  
Pleasure of seeing foreign Countries,  
and viewing the noble Remains of  
Antiquity there, wou'd have been very irksome, had  
not your Goodness from Time to Time reliev'd me  
with your ingenious Letters, which contain'd every  
Thing curious and entertaining that happen'd here at  
Home. Among the many delightful Accounts with  
which you was pleas'd to favour me, allow me to men-  
tion that of the Coney-borough at *Godalmin* in *Surrey*,  
which coming to my Hands when I was at *Rome*, and  
being so extraordinary in its Kind, after having tran-  
slated it into *Italian*, I found Means to have commu-  
nicated to some of the Cardinals, who were so highly  
pleas'd with it, that, as 'twas currently reported there  
afterwards, they unanimously voted it a Place in the  
*Vatican Library*. But, be that as it will, this I am



sure of, that I have not only seen, but receiv'd several Papers written by you, that justly deserve a Place there. The whole Employment and Business of your Life seems to be nothing else but one continued Search and Pursuit after Knowledge; so that you may very properly be stil'd the BOYLE of the present Age. Scarce a Book that contains any Thing new or curious, is publish'd, but what finds a Place in your Library; and whenever any Discovery is propos'd to the World, you are never at Rest till you have found out whether it has Truth to support and recommend it. For which Reason I am the more surpriz'd to find that the Books written about the *Montpellier*, or new Method of curing the Venereal Disease, shou'd have escap'd your Curiosity; and that the very first Hint and Intimation you had of it, was from an Advertisement you met with by Chance in the publick Prints, which you took the Pains to transcribe and send me to *Montpellier*, and which was in the following Words.

“ WHEREAS great Numbers of Gentlemen go  
 “ yearly from this City, and other Parts of the King-  
 “ dom, to *Montpellier*, on Account of the Venereal  
 “ Disease, where they seldom fail to meet with a per-  
 “ fect Cure, perform'd after a safe and pleasant Manner,  
 “ by Mercurial Frictions, which often occasion no Spit-  
 “ ting at all, and at most so small an one, as is free  
 “ from all manner of Uneasiness and Danger: A Phy-  
 “ sician who has made that Distemper his particular  
 “ Study, in order to save all Persons for the future the  
 “ Expence and Fatigue of such a Voyage Abroad, as  
 “ well as the Torture and Hazard of a Salivation at  
 “ Home, offers his Endeavours to convince them of  
 “ the Reasonableness and Efficacy of this new Method,  
 “ and at the same Time to shew them, that it is as ef-  
 “ fectual in *England* as in *France*, Change of Climate  
 “ making no Change at all in the Virtues of Mercury.  
 “ The Person who now makes this Offer, was once as  
 “ much



“ much prejudiced against this Method of Cure, as any  
 “ Physician or Surgeon can possibly be at present, and  
 “ had in all Probability still continued so, had he not  
 “ been convinced by ocular Demonstration, having  
 “ made a Journey on Purpose to *Montpellier*, where he  
 “ was an Eye-witness of nigh twenty Cures perform’d  
 “ this way by Mr. CHICOYNEAU, Chancellor of that  
 “ University, and other Professors of Physick there;  
 “ and since his Return from thence, having found by  
 “ several surprizing Cures effected here, even after Sa-  
 “ livation had prov’d ineffectual, that this most excel-  
 “ lent Method is altogether as efficacious at *London* as  
 “ at *Montpellier*, he thought himself oblig’d to publish  
 “ it for the publick Good; hoping it will not be the  
 “ less esteem’d, because communicated to the World  
 “ after this Manner, nor he himself censur’d as a Quack  
 “ or Impostor, for his Endeavours to contribute to the  
 “ Ease and Safety of Mankind.

“ WHOEVER has a Mind to speak with the Person  
 “ above-mention’d, is desir’d to send, or leave a Note  
 “ at Mr. HOWSON’S a Stationer, at the *Rose and Crown*  
 “ over against *Exeter-Change* in the *Strand*, mentioning  
 “ Time and Place, and always giving at least a Day’s  
 “ Notice before-hand.

N. B. “ THIS Method has been found effectual, not  
 “ only in Venereal, but likewise in many other obsti-  
 “ nate and inveterate Cases, even where Salivation had  
 “ fail’d; and is so very easy to the Patient, that ’tis  
 “ become a common Practice in *France*, particularly in  
 “ the Southern Parts of it, for all young Gentlemen,  
 “ who have meddled with common Women, tho’ in  
 “ Appearance they never receiv’d the least Damage,  
 “ yet always for Safety’s Sake, to undergo this Opera-  
 “ tion a little before they Marry.

THIS, like other Advertisements that promise a Cure  
 in all Venereal Cases, you at first imagin’d to be nothing  
 but Quackery and Imposture; however, your uncom-

“ mon



mon Curiosity carry'd you so far, as to send it me as far as *Montpellier*, desiring my Opinion of it; and at the same Time, if there was any real Foundation and Truth in what was there said of such a new Method, that I wou'd make an exact Enquiry into it, and oblige you with a fuller and more particular Account of it at my Leisure. As to what is asserted in that Advertisement, relating to the Manner and Excellency of this new Practice, you may remember, Sir, I acquainted you at that Time, that there was nothing but what was very modest, and far below the Truth; and since my Arrival at *London*, I have, upon Enquiry, found that the Author of it is so far from being an ignorant Quack, as you imagin'd, that he is a graduate Physician, and a Person of Learning, Probity and Experience, who resided several Months at *Montpellier*, on purpose to be thoroughly acquainted with this new Method, by which he has effected a great many extraordinary Cures since his Return to *London*.

As to the Reason why this new Way of Curing the Venereal Disease, is call'd the *Montpellier* Practice, 'tis because it was first try'd and introduc'd there by Mr. CHICOYNEAU, the Chancellor, and other Professors of Physick in that Place. The said Mr. CHICOYNEAU, and Mr. DIDIER, one of the Professors, have both written on the Subject. Mr. CHICOYNEAU's Book was translated into *English*, and illustrated with some Notes and Observations by Dr. WILLOUGHBY, and is entitled, *The Practice of Salivation shewn to be of no Use or Efficacy in the Cure of the Venereal Disease, but greatly prejudicial to it, &c.* To THAT therefore I might very well refer you, Sir, for full Satisfaction in this Matter; but since you have laid your Commands upon me, be pleas'd to accept of the following Account.

My Stay at *Montpellier* was very nigh eight Months, in which time, according to the best Information I cou'd get, fifty seven Persons were cur'd of this modish Distemper,



per, after the Manner in use there ; I was an Eye-Witness of fifteen, seven of which were *Engliſh*, whom I viſited conſtantly four or five Times a Week with ſome of the Profeſſors there. For I muſt inform you, Sir, that it is not at *Montpellier* as it is here in *London*, where the Surgeons pretend to engroſs the Cure of this Diſtemper wholly to themſelves, and raſhly throw People into Salivations without the Advice of a Phyſician ; for there no Surgeon preſumes to carry any Perſon thro' this ſafe and eaſy Operation without the Aſſiſtance of a Phyſician to adviſe and direct, while he himſelf only performs the manual Part of Uñction or Rubbing. The Perſons whom I conſtantly attended under this Operation were ſome of them in the moſt deplorable Condition that can be imagin'd, and three of them had been ſalivated before, without receiving any Benefit, and yet they were all perfectly cur'd by this Method. But before I proceed to give you an Account of the Manner of it, which is no more than a common Friction or Anointing with a Mercurial Unguent, 'twill not be improper to ſay ſomething of the *Apparatus*, or Way of preparing the Patient in order to undergo the Operation. Now, that is always at the Judgment of the Phyſician, according to the particular Exigencies of different Conſtitutions, and after he has examin'd each Perſon's particular Caſe, and finds the preſent State of the Patient's Blood and Habit of Body to be. Sometimes Blood is order'd to be taken away once or oftner ; ſometimes the Patient is purg'd, ſometimes laxative Ptifans, and a thin Diet are preſcrib'd ; but frequent Bathing is generally, if not always, order'd, to ſoften and relax the Fibres, and render the Body more perſpirable ; becauſe, if any Evacuation be neceſſary in the Cure of this Diſtemper, ſo ſubtle a Body as the Venereal Poiſon, and ſo volatile a Body as Mercury, after it has been ſufficiently rarified and circulated with the Blood, will be beſt carried out of the Body by the Pores of inſenſible Perſpiration.



AFTER this Preparation is over, the whole Operation consists in nothing more than rubbing the Patient with a Mercurial Ointment, in such Quantities, and at such Intervals of Time as the Physician shall judge proper; sometimes at the Distance of two, sometimes of three, and sometimes of four Days. As to the Quantity of Mercury, seldom more than six Drams, but oftner less, is sufficient for any Cure. In rubbing, sometimes they begin with the Soles of the Feet, sometimes with the Small of the Legs, ascending every Time a little higher till they come up to the Knees. There are some that order the Arms to be rubb'd, and some the Thighs. After any Part has been rubb'd, a Linnen Garment is provided to be put on it, as Socks for the Feet, Linnen Stockings for the Legs, &c. — The Time requir'd for this Operation is according to the Condition the Patient is in, a bad Case requiring more time than a slight one, but is generally from three Weeks to five. The Patient during that Time is confin'd to his Chamber, observing a low and regular Diet, but oftentimes suffers nothing more than a little Feverish Heat and Restlessness for a Day or two, when the Operation is at the Height.

THUS, Sir, after this gentle and easy Manner is the most dreadful and inveterate Pox with all its most dreadful Symptoms perfectly and radically cur'd. But here no doubt, you will be curious to be inform'd whether or no in this Method of Cure, any great and sensible Evacuations, are caus'd by these Mercurial Frictions, and if not, how 'tis possible a Cure can be effected? To this I answer, that sometimes a gentle moderate Spitting will happen, nor is it possible to prevent it in some Constitutions; but then 'tis never carried high, nor encourag'd, 'tis neither troublesome nor dangerous. And as for any great and sensible Evacuation, I can by no means conceive it necessary, because the Venereal Poison is so little in Quantity, and of so subtle a Nature, that as it was receiv'd into the Body by the Pores, so I take them



to be the best and properest Outlets for it, whilst that great Discharge of nasty ropy Matter by the Glands of the Throat, is so far from contributing towards the Cure, that 'tis rather an Hindrance and Obstruction to it : Because, by that means, the Mercury escapes and flies away, before it has sufficiently insinuated and mix'd it self in the Habit of the Body. And when it runs off so fast by the Salival Glands, and has not Time enough to penetrate into the finer Vessels, and inmost Recesses of the Body, 'tis impossible it shou'd induce such a Change in the Blood and Humours as is necessary, or cause any great and permanent Effect there ; and for this Reason, no doubt it is, that Cures attempted by the usual Way of Salivation, are so often left imperfect and unfinish'd. For this I will venture to lay down as a General Rule, that cures in this Distemper will always be found to be best perform'd, when the Mercury is longest detain'd in the Body. But because Venereal Patients are sometimes observ'd to grow well after a Salivation, and that a great Quantity of fetid Matter is always discharg'd during the Time of it, therefore such an Evacuation is by many judg'd necessary ; and the greater the Quantity of Matter is that the Patient then spits, and the more noisome its Smell is, the more radicated and virulent is the Distemper thought to have been, as well as the more perfect and effectual its Cure. But that this is a very great Mistake will plainly appear from hence ; that if two Persons are put into a Salivation at the same time, the one vigorous and robust, of a full Habit of Body, and in perfect Health ; the other weak and thin, of a shatter'd Constitution, emaciated and worn out with Venereal Pleasures, and the common Consequence of 'em, a Venereal *Lues* ; in this Case, I say, *cæteris paribus*, that the *Saliva* of the former Sound Person shall be as fetid, and its Quantity larger than that of the Infected. And if this be so, then it plainly appears that the Evacuation of a great Quantity of fetid Matter by the Salival Glands, is not the least Proof either that a Person is infected with a Venereal Taint, or that



any Part of the Poison is discharg'd that Way. Those Persons are strangely ignorant of the Nature of Mercury, who imagine that it acts chiefly as an Evacuant; no, its principal Efficacy and Virtues in this Distemper are alterative; 'tis the greatest Deobstruent and Corrector of sharp corrosive Acidities in the World. 'Tis very well known, that in the slightest and lowest Salivation a great many Pounds of fetid Matter (all which is commonly thought to be Part of the Venereal Taint) are constantly discharg'd; whereas I believe the greatest Quantity of Venereal Poison that ever any Man receiv'd at one Time never amounted to a Scruple in Weight. But then, Sir, you will perhaps say, that tho' all that Matter which is evacuated in a Salivation be not Original Venereal Poison, yet that 'tis nothing but filthy noxious Humours vitiated and corrupted by that Poison. But even this cannot be allow'd; because 'tis very certain that good as well as bad Juices are evacuated together in a Salivation. But supposing, Sir, what you imagine, that nothing but corrupt Humours are expell'd out of the Body at such a Time; yet, if by receiving a moderate Quantity of Mercury into the Body by Degrees, as in this new Method, those corrupt Humours can be so corrected and amended, as to become pure and salutary; you will allow, there will be no Necessity at all to evacuate them. That this may be done, and actually is so in this new Method of Cure, will, I believe appear, if we weigh a little the Effects of this Venereal Poison on the Animal Juices, and at the same time consider the Virtues of Mercury, and its Manner of Operation in an human Body. Now, the Effect of that Poison, as well as of most others, when it gets into the Blood, consists in causing Coagulations, and unnatural Cohesions of the Liquors, from whence arise Obstructions of the Glands; and when the Lymph has lain for some time obstructed there, it contracts an Acrimony, and becomes corrosive; from whence arise Pains, Scabs, Ulcers, &c. But Mercury,



cury, when mix'd with the Blood, by the Smallness of its Particles, is able to enter into those slender Canals, where the Blood it self cannot freely pass, and by that Means scours all the most minute Passages of the Body. And then by its Force and Weight, it breaks down all Obstructions, and opens the impassable Canals; and by Virtue of its Weight, and the Smallness of its Parts together, it scours all the Glands of the Body, removes all viscid Concretions of Matter that have been lodg'd upon them, dissolves all unnatural Cohesions of the Juices, and renders them fluid, active, and useful. But there still remains another Property in Mercury, which compleats its Specifick Virtue in curing this Disease without Salivation, and that is its peculiar Power in destroying the Acrimony and Corrosiveness of the Animal Juices, and consequently of correcting all sorts of foul, eroding, and fistulating Ulcers. This Corrosiveness proceeds, no doubt, from the Pointedness of the minute Parts of the stagnated, putrifying Fluid. Now Mercury, where-ever it comes, not only removes all Obstructions, and makes the Vessels passable by Virtue of its Weight, but likewise by the same Power breaks off and planes the sharp Points and Angles of those Particles, and so renders them harmless and innocent.

By this Time, Sir, I persuade my self you begin to be convinc'd that the Antivenereal Virtue of Mercury, or that Power by which it cures the Venereal Disease, is altogether independent of any Salival Evacuation. But to put this Matter beyond all future Doubt, I shall quote an Authority, which, I am sure, will be of great Weight with you, as well as with all other Persons of Learning and good Understanding; and that is, the learned Dr. CHEYNE, who, in his ingenious *New Theory of Fevers*, speaking of the Operation of Mercurial Medicines, p. 120, &c. has the following Words: " But here it might be  
" objected, *says he*, that the grand Effect ( as most Peo-  
" ple believe ) of mercurial Medicines is Salivation, and



“ that really the salivary *Glands* secrete more of their  
 “ Fluids proportionally, than any other *Glands* of the  
 “ Body. To this I answer:

“ 1. THAT the principal Effect of Mercury is the at-  
 “ tenuating the Fluids, the clearing the Canals, and the  
 “ destroying the Corrosiveness of the Obstructions; and  
 “ that Salivation has no more Title to be the principal  
 “ Effect of Mercury, than insensible Perspiration.

“ 2. IT is evident that Salivation is not the main Ef-  
 “ fect of Mercury, from this, that many Persons are cur'd  
 “ of very dangerous Poxes, Ulcers and Rheumatisms,  
 “ without ever Salivating, at least at the ordinary Rate  
 “ of Salivation.

“ 3. THE Reason why we seem to secrete more by the  
 “ Salivary *Glands* proportionally, than by any, or most  
 “ others, is because the salivary *Glands* are more in Num-  
 “ ber than any of those which separate visible Fluids;  
 “ and consequently it is but reasonable they shou'd secrete  
 “ more than any other. It is true, the *Glands* of insen-  
 “ sible Perspiration are more in Number than those; and  
 “ it is not to be doubted but they secrete more likewise;  
 “ and it will be found so, whenever the Thing is exa-  
 “ min'd after *Sanctorius's* Method; but that Secretion  
 “ not being visible, makes the Matter doubted.

IT appears from this Author, besides what I quoted  
 him to prove, that upon Mercury's being mix'd with the  
 Blood, the cuticular Discharge by the Pores of insensible  
 Perspiration, is increas'd in Proportion to the salival Eva-  
 cuation by the *Glands* of the Throat. I do not therefore  
 positively affirm, Sir, that in a Salivation no part of the  
 Venereal Poison whatever is carry'd out of the Body in  
 the *Saliva*; all I contend for is, that a salival Evacuation  
 is not necessary to the Cure of this Distemper; and that  
 the *Montpellier* Method of curing it, by rubbing a less  
 Quantity of Mercury into the Body, and at greater In-  
 tervals of Time, is in every Respect preferable to it; but  
 more particularly, as it is a much more *certain, easy, and*  
*safe* way of Cure.



IN the first Place, I believe, the most zealous Advocates and Sticklers for Salivating in the Venereal Disease, will allow that Salivations have often fail'd; nay, that many Persons have undergone that dreadful Operation twice, nay even thrice, and yet have not found an effectual Cure: Whereas upon the strictest Enquiry I was able to make at *Montpellier*, among many Hundreds who had been treated after this new way, I cou'd not find that any one Person, whose Case was truly Venereal, had miss'd a perfect Cure. I have since made the same Enquiry at *Paris*, and even here in *London*, and cannot yet find that it has ever fail'd; and that it has often cur'd, after Salivations have fail'd, is a most certain and undoubted Truth. If, Sir, you shou'd be surpriz'd, and wonder how 'tis possible that this new Method shou'd be more effectual than the common one by Salivation, since in both Cases the Cure seems to be owing to the same Cause, that is, the mechanical Powers of Mercury; and that the only Difference between them is, that in this new way, a less Quantity of Mercury is sent into the Body, and at a greater Interval of Time; whereas in the common way of raising a Salivation by Uñction, a greater Quantity of Mercury is thrown into the Body in less Time, and consequently that a greater and more permanent Effect ought to be expected from it; what I have to say is this, That when a considerable Quantity of Mercury is thrown into the Blood in a short Time, it will not in this Case be so capable of rarefying and diffusing it self gradually and uniformly through all the Parts of Body, as when it is admitted into it slowly, and in small Quantities: For the sudden Rarefaction, and extreme Volatility of the Mercury, occasion'd by the natural Heat of the Body, will determine its principal Force and Efficacy upwards; that is, it will ascend in a strong plentiful Steam or Vapour to the Head, and be thrown off by the salival *Glands*, before it has had sufficient Time to mix and circulate with the Blood and Lymph, in all the slender minute Vessels,  
and



and there induce that Change and Alteration in the animal Fluids, which it wou'd necessarily have effected, if it had continued in the Body a longer Time. And this, Sir, I take to be the true Reason why Salivations so often fail, and why this new Method is so certain and effectual. And if this way of curing the Venereal Disease be more certain, I am persuaded there is no Body but will allow that it is infinitely more easy than the common way by Salivation. All that the Patient undergoes or suffers, when treated after this new Manner, is only, as I told you before, a little slight feverish Heat and Uneasiness, perhaps for two, or three Days at most, and sometimes a gentle moderate Spitting, attended with little or no Pain at all. But what is this in Comparison to what every Person suffers that goes through a Salivation? To those that have seen or undergone one themselves, I need say but very little; but to those that have not, 'tis certainly a Sight very horrid and shocking to behold. To have the Head swell'd to more than twice its natural Size, the Eyes ready to burst and fly out of it, the Teeth all loose, and just dropping out of their Sockets, besides a want of due Rest and Nourishment for Weeks together, and all that Time to do nothing but drivel out a fetid filthy Matter, that renders a Person nauseous to himself, and to all that come near him, is certainly a Condition no one would come into without the utmost and very last Necessity; and yet all that I have said comes vastly short, and is but a very slight and imperfect Representation of what is constantly seen and suffer'd in every Salivation. So that I may with the utmost Truth affirm, that 'tis much better and easier, and what every Man in his Senses wou'd sooner chuse, to go thorough a Cure after this new Manner twenty Times, than to undergo the Pain and Torture of one Salivation. Nay, so very little is the Trouble or Uneasiness of it thought to be where it is commonly practis'd, that is to say, in the Southern Parts of *France*, that 'tis undertaken with  
the



the same Unconcern as we here take a Vomit, a Purge, or a little Blood away. And by Reason of its Easiness as well as Safety, 'tis grown so familiar there, that no young Gentleman, who suspects himself to have contracted the least Venereal Taint, or who has once convers'd with a common Woman, ever thinks of entering into the State of Matrimony, nor will the Relations on the Bride's Side suffer it to be consummated, before he has gone through this Operation, to cleanse his Body from all possible Remains of it; which might otherwise perhaps lie lurking there many Years, and breaking out at last, utterly ruin his Wife's Constitution, as well as transmit Rottenness to Posterity.

FROM hence, Sir, it appears, that this new Practice has both Certainty, Ease and Safety, to recommend it above the common way by Salivation, or any other way yet discover'd. Not one Instance, I believe, can be given of any Person that ever miscarry'd under it, or whose Constitution has suffer'd by it. But the same cannot be said of Salivations, because 'tis notorious to all the World, that great Numbers die yearly under 'em; and that numberless Constitutions have been, and always will be, ruin'd by them. But as I am endeavouring to introduce a new Practice in Opposition to Salivation, and may therefore be suspected of Partiality in what I shall say my self; in order to shew the Danger and ill Consequences of throwing a great Quantity of Mercury into the Blood in a short space of Time, so as to raise a Salivation, as well as the great Advantages arising from a prudent and moderate Use of it according to this new Method, I shall rather chuse to let another Person speak for me; and that is the learned Dr. MORGAN, in his *Philosophical Principles of Medicine*, p. 420. "When a Substance, says he, of such Force and Efficacy as Mercury is thrown suddenly in great Quantities, and with Violence upon any of the Glands, it must needs be extremely hurtful and mischievous: For, in this Case, the



“ the sudden Rarefaction, expansive Force, and violent  
 “ Efforts of the Mercury, rous’d and excited into Action  
 “ by the natural Heat, must overstretch the nervous  
 “ *Fibrillæ*, suspend their Action, and quite break, dis-  
 “ solve and destroy the natural Structure and Conforma-  
 “ tion of the Parts; and the Structure and Organization  
 “ of the Solids being thus broken and destroy’d, the  
 “ Fluids must stagnate, corrupt and putrify, and the  
 “ Obstructions become inveterate and incurable.

“ HENCE it is that they who have been too severely  
 “ treated with Mercury in the *Lues venerea*, are very  
 “ often made more deplorable Victims to the Fury of  
 “ the Medicine, than to that of the Disease; and a Di-  
 “ stemper which scarce deserves a Cure, is render’d un-  
 “ capable of any. I know that the unhappy in this Case  
 “ are generally impatient of Delay, and eager for a spee-  
 “ dy Cure; but the Event seldom answers their Expe-  
 “ ctations, and a little present hasty Relief is for the  
 “ most part follow’d with a long Train of hopeless and  
 “ remediless Evils, which might have been prevented  
 “ by a more rational and deliberate Method.

AND Pag. 426, after having shew’d the many and sin-  
 gular Virtues of Mercury, and that it is no ways hurtful  
 to the Nerves, he proceeds thus; “ I desire it may be  
 “ here observ’d, that what I have said of Mercury, as  
 “ one of the most effectual and powerful Deobstruents,  
 “ is to be understood as abstracted from Salivation, or  
 “ any such way of giving it, as to promote any great,  
 “ sensible, or violent Evacuation. For where Mercury  
 “ is thus given, it must needs break, dissolve, and de-  
 “ stroy the natural Texture and Constitution of the So-  
 “ lids, and glandular Organs upon which it happens to  
 “ be precipitated, and thrown with such Violence; and  
 “ the elastick Motive *Fibrillæ*, having thus lost their na-  
 “ tural Force and proper Action, any Lodgment of vis-  
 “ cid obstructing Matter upon such Glands for the future,  
 “ must be fix’d there without Remedy, and the Obstru-  
 “ ction



“ tion become incurable. And hence it is that they  
 “ who have been injudiciously treated with Mercury by  
 “ too strong and violent Salivations, are often reduc’d to  
 “ the most deplorable Circumstances, and put out of all  
 “ the Hopes and Possibility of a Cure by any other Me-  
 “ thod.

“ I know it will be urg’d by some, that Salivation in  
 “ an high Degree is necessary to the Cure of the Venereal  
 “ Disease, where it is once strongly or deeply fix’d. But  
 “ such is my Incredulity and Diffidence, that I am very  
 “ apt to question the Truth of this in Fact; and I only  
 “ desire those, who have any great Experience in this  
 “ Case, to tell us faithfully whether they have ever known  
 “ a good Cure wrought by a high Salivation upon such as  
 “ have been much afflicted with hypochondriacal and hy-  
 “ sterial Disorders; and whether the Success has not fail’d  
 “ in Proportion to the Strength of the Salivation, and the  
 “ Overstretch of the obstructed convulsed Glands? But  
 “ this, I think, is certain, that the greater the Obstru-  
 “ ction of the Glands is, and the more they are tumefy’d,  
 “ distended and stimulated, the less capable will they be  
 “ of any violently impress’d Force of Mercury, and the  
 “ more necessary will it be to do the Work with more  
 “ Moderation, and in longer Time.”

To what I have already cited, give me Leave, Sir, to  
 add a few Lines from the ingenious Dr. QUINCY, in his  
 Essay on Venereal Diseases, subjoin’d to his Explanation  
 of *Sanctorius’s* Aphorisms, Pag. 463. “ The common  
 “ Methods of *Salivation*, says he, and rough *Catharticks*,  
 “ do not only fail of Cure, but also occasion great  
 “ Mischiefs; because they rob the Constitution of its  
 “ best Defence against the Distemper, a soft balsamick  
 “ Blood, and leave it afterwards much more expos’d to  
 “ a merciless Tormentor, whence infallibly also comes on  
 “ an incurable Hectick.”

WHAT these excellent Authors have said is so strong,  
 full, and convincing, that tho’ I cou’d produce the Opini-  
 ons of several of the best and most learned Writers in



Physick to the same Purpose, yet I shall trouble you with no more Quotations, but leave the whole Stress and Issue of the Dispute between this new Method of Cure, and the old one by Salivation, on their Evidence; and proceed to acquaint you, Sir, in what other Diseases, besides the Venereal, this Practice has been found successful. In all Foulnesses and Obstructions of the Glands, in all *Lentors* and Viscidities of the Blood and Humours, in all inveterate Pains of the Joints and Limbs, in all Scabs, Blotches, Ulcers, and Distempers of the Skin, in all Cachexies or ill Habits of Body, in the Scurvey, Rheumatism, and often in the *Sciatica*, and King's-Evil, it has been found the only effectual Cure in the World: And in many other Cases in which it has been try'd, and has not succeeded so effectually, this however may be said in its Commendation, that where it has not done much Good, it has however never done the least Harm; and may therefore in all Cases be very justly call'd *safe Practice*.

BUT here perhaps some one may object against the external Use of Mercury, and affirm, that ill Consequences have sometimes arisen from it; and may at the same Time demand, whether the Mercury which is rubb'd into the Body does not always remain in it; and if not, which way it is discharg'd out of it, when no Salivation ensues? 'Tis very well known that Mercury is made use of to raise Salivations outwardly apply'd in Uction, as well as inwardly taken; and that ill Consequences have sometimes arisen from it, when us'd both these ways, I make no Doubt; but then those ill Effects have always proceeded, not from the right Use, but from the Abuse of it; either for want of giving it with Judgment and Discretion, or else because it was not rightly prepar'd. If too great a Quantity of it be either taken inwardly, or rubb'd in by Uction in too short a Time, as is generally done in raising a Salivation, 'twill for the most part do more Harm than Good; because in such a Case, if Life be not always in apparent Danger, the Constitution certainly is. And where it is thrown into the Body by Friction, if the Ointment



ment be not rightly prepar'd, as it often happens in common mercurial Unguents, Plaisters, Girdles, &c. ill Effects must necessarily and unavoidably follow. But where, in preparing the Ointment, the mercurial Globules are sufficiently divided, comminuted, and separated from each other; in such a Case, there is no doubt but it may be as safely us'd, and with better Effect, than if inwardly taken. For when it is so prepar'd, its fine and volatile Particles will not fail to mix and circulate with the Blood and Juices wherever they go; but where the Circulation happens to be broken off, the Mercury, whether inwardly taken, or outwardly apply'd, must of Necessity stop. As to the latter part of the Objection, in which 'tis apprehended, that the Mercury which is forc'd into the Body by Friction, will always remain there, and consequently produce bad Effects, unless it be carry'd off by a Salivation; this I am sure will be of no Weight at all with you, Sir, who perfectly understand the Animal Oeconomy, and know very well that as much at least, if not more, is carry'd out of the Body every Day by insensible Perspiration, than by all the sensible Evacuations put together. But to those who are ignorant of this, my Answer is, that there is more Danger in this new Method of Cure, that the Mercury shou'd fly off too fast, and leave the Body too soon, before it has produc'd the desir'd Effect on the Blood and Juices, than that it shou'd remain too long in the Body, and be attended with any ill Consequences. For when the Mercury has for some Time circulated with the Blood, since 'tis impossible to be assimilated with it, Nature wou'd not fail to exert her self in order to expel it, if it was necessary; but as it is in self of so volatile a Nature, especially after being rarefy'd by the Heat of the Body, 'tis impossible it shou'd be long retain'd in it; but it flies out of it with Speed at every excretory Organ. So that some Part of it, when there is a Spitting, may possibly be carry'd off by the Salival Glands, some by the Glands of the Intestines, some by the Kidneys, but the far greatest Part, no doubt, flies off by the Pores of insensible Perspiration. As it was at first receiv'd into the



Body by the Pores, so they seem to be the properest Outlet for so volatile a Body as Mercury, as well as for so subtle a Body as the Venereal Poison. And that a vast Quantity of Mercury is thrown out off the Body that Way, is evident from hence, that Gold Rings on Persons Fingers under a Salivation are often colour'd white by the Mercurial *Effluvia* that exhale from their Bodies at that Time.

THERE is but one other Objection, Sir, which I know ever has, or, I think, possibly can be made against this New Method of Cure, and that is, that notwithstanding it has succeeded very well in *France*, yet that perhaps it may not prove so effectual here in *England*. But to this I hope to give a very full and satisfactory Answer. In the first place then, I presume, it will be allow'd me, that the natural Properties of Mercury are the same in both Kingdoms, that 'tis both as heavy and as volatile in *England* as in *France*; and I have before shew'd, that 'tis by Virtue of its Mechanical Powers, and not by any great and sensible Evacuations that are sometimes caus'd by it, that 'tis a Specifick in Venereal Cases. If Mercury be as effectual in *England* to remove Obstructions, dissolve unnatural Cohesions, correct the Acidities, and destroy the Corrosiveness of the Blood and Juices, as it is in *France*, then I am sure it will as effectually cure all Kind of Venereal Disorders in *England* as in *France*. If it be urg'd, that the Climate of *France* is hotter than that of *England*, and consequently the insensible Perspiration there greater than here with us; I know no Advantage at all that can arise from thence, but perhaps the contrary; that by means of a greater Perspiration, the Mercurial *Effluvia* may fly off too fast, before they have effected a sufficient Alteration and Change in the Blood and Fluids. And THAT perhaps is one Reason at least, why the Physicians at *Montpellier* never put any Person under this Operation in the hotter Months of the Year. And whoever considers that more than two Pounds of such gross Substances as we daily eat and drink, are constantly carry'd



ry'd off by insensible Perspiration in four and twenty Hours, will be in no Pain at all for fear lest an Ounce of so volatile a Body as Mercury, and so subtle a Body as the Venereal Poison, which is more than both put together amount to in Weight, shou'd not be transpir'd or carry'd out of the Body in almost as many Days. For the actual Venereal Taint, if we may judge of it from its Manner of Communication and Operation, is so very subtle, that on Account of its Quantity 'tis of no Consequence at all; but only from its mischievous Effects on the Blood and Humours. And the Mercury, when its Particles are sufficiently broken and separated from each other in preparing the Unguent, and 'tis afterwards rarefy'd by the natural Heat, becomes so very Volatile, that it often flies off too soon, but never remains so long in the Body as to produce any ill Effect. If this Way of Reasoning will not satisfy, I must appeal to Facts, against which there is no disputing. Dr. WILLOUGHBY, in his Notes and Observations on Mr. CHICOYNEAU's Book, gives an Account of two or three Cases, of which he had then been an Eye-Witness here in *England*, where the Cure was effected after this Manner by Mercurial Frictions, without occasioning the least Salivation. The Author of the Advertisement you sent me to *Montpellier*, which is printed in the Beginning of this Letter, has perform'd a great Number of Cures here in Town after the same Manner; and there is a *French* Surgeon here at present who has likewise perform'd some; but for want of Judgment, or the Advice of a skilful Physician, he has likewise committed some Blunders. As for my own Part, I was resolv'd to make several Trials my self before I wrote to you; in all which, I assure you, I have succeeded even beyond my Expectation.

Thus, Sir, have I given you a short, but true Account of the *Montpellier*, or new Practice in Curing the Venereal Disease, and all its most direful Attendants; I have likewise briefly shewn its Excellency and Preferableness



rableness in every Respect to all other Methods yet discover'd ; more particularly, as it is the most *certain*, *easy*, and *safe* Way of Cure yet known. At the same time, I think, I have sufficiently demonstrated the Inefficacy, Danger, and ill Consequences of the common Way by Salivation, not from my own Reasoning only, but from great and unquestionable Authorities : I have in some Measure endeavour'd to explain how Mercury operates, and effects so certain a Cure in this Distemper when discreetly manag'd, and have shewn that 'tis chiefly, if not wholly owing to the Change and Alteration that is made in the Blood and Humours by the Weight and Volatility of the Mercurial Particles, and not to any great and sensible Evacuations that are sometimes occasion'd by it. I have acquainted you in what other Diseases, besides the Venereal, this new Practice has been found successful, and have answer'd all the Objections, I ever heard were, or, think, can possibly, be made against it ; and lastly, I have confirm'd its Usefulness and Success here in *England* by Facts not to be disputed. So that whilst I have been discharging my self of a particular Obligation to you, I hope, I have at the same time done something for the general Good. For I can scarce persuade my self that any Person in his right Senses will for the future go as far as *Montpellier* for a Cure, which he may be sure of finding here at home ; or undergo the Torture and Danger of a Salivation, when he can meet with a more effectual, safe, and easy Cure without it. Shou'd this excellent Method once prevail here, as there is all imaginable Reason to believe it will, 'twou'd in a very short Time save many Thousands of his Majesty's Subjects ; and allow me on this Occasion, the Vanity to assure you, that I have already sav'd one of the most valuable Lives in *England* by it. Nay, shou'd it once become universal, 'twou'd be the utter Downfal of all that profligate Tribe, who plague Mankind with their pretended Cures of this Distemper, from Dr. MI—BIN down to Dr. C—M.



IF you shou'd ask me, Sir, how it comes to pass, that a Method which carries every Recommendation in the World along with it, shou'd not be more generally practis'd; I can only say, that one principal Reason I take to be, because it is not generally known. I have discours'd with several Physicians here about it, who seem most of 'em entirely unacquainted with it; and the most Learned among them who approve of it, say, that it does not lie directly in their Way, and that they have very few Opportunities of making such Trials. The Meaning of which is, that thro' an ill Custom that has, I don't know how, prevail'd here, 'tis reckon'd disreputable for a Physician so much as to give his Advice, or any way concern himself in Venereal Cases; and to do so, is enough to ruin him in his other Practice. So that the Surgeons are, in a manner, the only Advisers and Practitioners in such Cases; and they say Salivation is what they were bred to, what they have always practis'd, and what they will always stand by; nor will they by any Means whatever be prevail'd on to admit of a new *French* Method to cure an old *French* Disease. How good and just a Way of Reasoning theirs is, I leave you to judge, Sir. But yet this is to be said for 'em, that how painful and dangerous soever a Cure by Salivation may be to the Patient; yet so plain, easy, and obvious is the Way of raising it, that even Apothecaries Boys, and Surgeons Apprentices are not afraid to undertake it; with what Success, I will not say. But 'tis quite otherwise at *Montpellier*, as I told you before, where the Surgeon only performs the Manual Part of Rubbing, while one of the Professors constantly stands by to advise and direct; and indeed they are well paid for their Attendance; an *English* Gentleman seldom or never coming off there for less than Eight hundred or a thousand Livres, and generally a handsome Present to the Physician besides.

BUT to do Justice to our *London* Surgeons, you must excuse me, Sir, if I cannot entirely agree with you, that 'tis wholly owing to their Forwardness and Presumption  
in



in undertaking the Cure of this Distemper themselves without any better Advice, that we meet with so many imperfect Cures, and so many broken Constitutions; no, there are two Opinions, with neither of which I can by any Means agree, that have much contributed to the same End; the first is, that of some over-nice and scrupulous Gentlemen of the Faculty, who believe that all the Consequences and direful Effects of this Disease are no more than the just Reward of it, and that they who suffer under it, ought not to receive any Help or Assistance whatever; the other more general and prevailing Opinion is, what I just now mention'd, that 'tis dishonourable for a Physician of Note and Character any way to concern himself in the Cure of it; so that the Unhappy in these Circumstances are in a manner forc'd to put themselves under the Care of Surgeons, or else fall into worse Hands. But, for my own part, I think it so far from being a Dishonour, that I have always thought it a Duty, and shall always think so, to assist the *Unhappy* in every State and Condition of Life, and to leave it to Heaven alone to punish in the *next* World, the Crimes and Offences committed in *this*.

IN a word, Sir, if the Publick shall happen to receive any Benefit and Advantage from what I have written concerning this New Method of Cure, as I flatter my self it will, the Merit will be chiefly yours, whose Request laid me under an Obligation of obeying you in the best Manner I was able; since upon so many Accounts you have a Right to command every Thing in the Power of,

S I R,

Your most Oblig'd, and

Most Obedient Servant,















